

21W.755, Writing and Reading Short Stories (Fall 2006)  
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**Session 10: Reality**

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To create fiction (and alternate reality)

**real = unreal**

They must balance. The more removed, the more tactile. The more alien the setting/situation/characters, the more solid physical detail is needed to build that reality.

In work that does not reflect immediate assumption of reality, you need to teach the reader the rules of the other world. This applies to any situation that the reader may find unfamiliar, not only magical realism or speculative fiction. If you are writing about **any** situation/world/environment where you cannot be certain that the reader is familiar, you must introduce and create the rules.

Aristophanes – change **ONLY one** thing and the rest must follow logically (Márquez)

If you change too many rules, the reader becomes confused or angry. You must build on the reader's understanding of how the universe works.

Discuss: Porter, Márquez, LeGuin

Porter

- outline of story
- What did she fictionalize?
- How did the writing surprise her?

Márquez – Aristophanes, 1 change **rooted in reality**

- idea – an angel
- but trace it down
- what other ideas (reality)?
- Pelayo and Elisenda

LeGuin

- the story as idea
- why write this as a story? (power of crafting the reality of the conundrum)
- to make the idea real, to give it flesh – to bring it home on the physical/emotional level, not just the intellectual

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